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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/822,824	03/30/2001	Fabrice Geiger	AM3023/T28200	8091

32588 7590 11/18/2002

APPLIED MATERIALS, INC.
2881 SCOTT BLVD. M/S 2061
SANTA CLARA, CA 95050

EXAMINER

ESTRADA, MICHELLE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2823

DATE MAILED: 11/18/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/822,824

Applicant(s)

GEIGER ET AL

Examiner

Michelle Estrada

Art Unit

2823

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 September 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 22-29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 7.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Group I (claims 1-21) in Paper No. 10 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term "generally" in claims 1-21 is a relative term, which renders the claim indefinite. The term "generally" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably appraised of the scope of the invention. If applicant intends an irregular surface, it must be clearly recited.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Sandhu et al. (5,139,967) and Maeda et al. (5,314,538).

Sandhu et al. discloses loading a substrate having a BPSG layer deposited there over into a substrate processing chamber, said BPSG layer having an upper surface that is generally non-planar; and exposing said substrate to a laser light at conditions sufficient to cause a reflow of said BPSG so that said upper surface is generally planar (Col. 2, lines 30-47); wherein in said exposing step comprises exposing said substrate to said laser light having a desired wavelength and a desired energy level to break at least some SiOH bonds in said BPSG layer; the exposing step densifies the BPSG layer; wherein the depositing step comprises inserting said substrate into a substrate processing chamber and introducing a phosphorus-containing source and a boron-containing source into said processing chamber to deposit said BPSG insulating layer over said substrate (Col. 1, line 64-Col. 2, line 5); wherein the BPSG is a PMD layer; further comprising performing said depositing steps and said exposing step in a substrate processing chamber.

Sandhu et al. does not disclose that the laser operates specifically at a UV light.

Maeda et al. discloses exposing a BPSG layer to an ultraviolet radiation to densify the BPSG layer (Col. 8, lines 50-55) using lamps and further heating the wafer during the exposing step; wherein the BPSG is a PMD layer; further comprising performing said deposition step in a first processing chamber and said exposing step in a second processing chamber.

It would have been within the scope of one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Sandhu et al. and Maeda et al. to enable formation of the BPSG layer.

Choice of a particular light wavelength, light energy level, exposure time and substrate temperature would have been a matter of routine optimization within the teaching of the references. The laser fluence and exposure time will depend in part upon the thickness of the layer being planarized. See MPEP 2144.05.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michelle Estrada whose telephone number is (703) 308-0729. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Olik Chaudhuri can be reached on 703-306-2794. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-7722 for regular communications and 703-308-7724 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.



MEstrada

November 14, 2002

